

The Monthly Musical Record.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1876.

THE BAYREUTH FESTIVAL.

BAYREUTH, August.

WAGNER's great day has come at last. The artistic success of the *Nibelungen* trilogy at Bayreuth has exceeded the most sanguine expectations. The genius of the composer, his indomitable perseverance, his unremitting zeal and energy, have accomplished what no master of his art has ever accomplished before him. His triumph is complete; his most implacable adversaries are silenced; and of him it may with truth be said:—

"Often by illusions cheated,
Often baffled and defeated
In the tasks to be completed,
He, by toil and self-denial,
To the highest shall attain."

There are not wanting those who even now exclaim, "How much greater might have been Wagner's success, if it were not made a party success!" As if, forsooth, every great success were not a party success! As such, it implies struggle, contest, superior resources, superior industry, superior energy, superior talent. Why, without the bitterness of strife, the palm of victory would not be worth having! But the success of the Bayreuth Festival is the more significant because it indicates, as far as regards the cultivation of art, a highly advanced state of society. In its own way, the success of Gluck's *Iphigenia* is quite as memorable an event in the history of music as that of Wagner's *Nibelungen*; nor are there wanting instances of a generous and high-minded prince like the present King of Bavaria (who is so often misunderstood) coming to the aid of an enterprise which requires a more substantial prop than the genius of its originator. But that the *crème de la crème* of artists, both vocal and instrumental, should have so cheerfully lent their co-operation to the undertaking; that they should have sacrificed their well-earned rest from labour during the hottest months of the year; that for weeks together they should have gone through the most fatiguing rehearsals; that these spoiled favourites of Court theatres should have had the self-denial and patience to submit to the rigid discipline of the exacting maestro, and all this either gratis or for a remuneration which barely covers their expenses—that assuredly indicates a very high standard of art. It is the cultivation of art for its own sake; and it is at the same time the highest tribute they could pay to Wagner's genius. Never had a great master more brilliant and more devoted coadjutors. It was not the love of immediate pecuniary gain, but the love of art, the love of honour, the divine flame that prompted them; and this enhances immeasurably the intrinsic merit of this festival: without it, the triumph would be less complete; it would simply be the crowning triumph of an already dominant school.

Enough has been written about the plot of the *Ring des Nibelungen* to familiarise interested readers with it. Suffice it to say that Wagner's libretto is adapted from the greatest epic poem of German literature—the "German Iliad," as it is called—and that it relates the love, the deeds, and the tragic end of the legendary heroes and heroines, Siegmund and Sieglinde, and Siegfried (their son), and Brünhilde, who all descend from Wotan, a god of very incomplete moral sense. The story pivots on the ring of the "Nibelungen," the sword "Nothung," and the tarnhelm, which render the possessor all-powerful,

invincible, and invisible. Like all legendary heroes and heroines, Wotan's descendants often think very lightly of virtue; a prominent place is assigned to love and valour, and passion is often made the excuse for perjury, treachery, and faithlessness. The leading characteristic of the *Nibelungen* is its grand simplicity, and the powerful delineation of its characters. The action is distributed over a prelude, the "Rheingold," and the trilogy consisting of *Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*; and the last of these is not only the culminating point, but undoubtedly the most luminous part of the whole.

It was my good fortune to arrive at Bayreuth when the grand rehearsals were going on. They were intended specially for the King of Bavaria, and were perhaps even more interesting than the actual festival. Owing to the well-known aversion of the king to being seen, the original intention of excluding the general public from these rehearsals was rigidly adhered to on the first night; but on the following day the king expressed a wish to see a full house, and the house was filled forthwith. Holders of certificates were admitted free, others on payment of twenty marks (£1), so that these rehearsals constituted really the first of four series of performances; this concession drew largely, and every seat in the house was soon occupied. Moreover, these rehearsals had more a character *en famille* about them, and even in the town, at the *table d'hôte* and elsewhere, the intercourse among the artists, their friends, and strangers, had a similar appearance. The international bustle in the streets, and in hotels, and the line of carriages and foot-passengers on the road leading to Wagner's Theatre, which stands well on a gentle eminence, about ten minutes' walk from the town, reminded me much of the scene at Oberammergau during the Passion-play.

The performance begins at 4.30 p.m. Up to that time the auditorium is still, though but dimly, lighted up. The king's arrival is the signal for all lights being lowered, and this state of semi-darkness is preserved throughout the performance; for Wagner claims the attention of the audience exclusively for the stage, and the attempt at reading the libretto, or at following with the vocal score, is all but useless. There is no jingling of bells, no tapping with the bâton on the prompter's box to announce the beginning of the performance; a leading subject of the opera, as in the *Götterdämmerung* the Walhalla subject, is given three times, and after the introduction the silk curtains are drawn aside—an immense improvement upon the time-honoured custom of the curtain being drawn up.

The degree of perfection which has been attained in the stage arrangements, in the appurtenances, in the costumes, in the acting, singing, and playing, is truly marvellous, and tells of an immensity of careful labour, study, and preparation. Every scenic effect, every gesture, every attitude, every musical phrase sung by the artists or played by the band, reveals the master's eye and the master's hand; and as one scene after another is unrolled before us, we are puzzled which has the greater claim to our admiration—the genius of the composer, or the talent, ingenuity, and gift of inspiration of the manager. It is true that in the libretto of the *Nibelungen*, as indeed in that of *Tristan*, beauty and clearness of language are often sacrificed to the composer's principle of rhythm, and to the characteristic swing of his musical phrases; and it is quite possible to imagine that in parts he might have tortured his native language rather less. But still there is a wonderful coherence, unity, and harmony in the whole; the scenic displays, though formidable, are truly artistic, and have nothing sensational about them; and the leading idea is carried out not only most beautifully, but with admirable consistency. The most remarkable feature of the

whole is undoubtedly the so-called "mystic gulf"—the partially-covered space which separates the stage from the auditorium, and in which the orchestra, the conductor, and prompter are sunk, so that they are concealed from the audience. The effect of this novel arrangement which has been ridiculed by so many hasty critics, is most extraordinary. No glaring gas-lights from the desks of the musicians; no contortions of instruments and players; no overpowering solitary thunder of the brass instruments and drums at one end of the orchestra; no rasping and groaning of the double-basses at the other; no drowning of the voices by the band: none of these most objectionable features of the traditional opera-band mar the effect of what passes on the stage; but so wonderful is the concentration of sound that the effect of the combined band is rather that of one single instrument, powerful yet subdued, emitting an incessant flow of music, yet distinctness in every note that reaches the ear; independent of the vocal music, yet a part of the whole organism; descriptive of the dramatic action, yet never interfering with the intended effect of the vocal music—that of a drama sung. In this respect one performance at Bayreuth will afford the interested reader a deeper insight into Wagner's theory of "musical drama;" into the aim and object of his undertaking, than all the volumes which he and his disciples have written on the subject. Nor can I help thinking that the adoption of this mode of sinking and partly covering the orchestra will only be a question of time in other theatres, for an additional advantage of so sinking the orchestra is that the audience is not wearied by the incessant predominance of the instrumental music. Although each performance at Bayreuth occupies about five hours and a half, including two entr'actes, the attention of the audience remains riveted up to the very end. The entrances and exits of the auditorium are admirably arranged, and the pleasant grounds surrounding the theatre, the excellent arrangements for refreshments, the extremely pretty view of the town and the country round about, and the invigorating air for which Bayreuth is remarkable, add much to the charm and enjoyment of the festival.

All the parts are in the hands of picked artists; Berlin, Vienna, Munich, Cologne, Leipzig, Mannheim, and other stages are represented; and the band is perhaps the finest that ever played in any theatre. Only in one respect Wagner seems to have been less fortunate—in the selection of the tenors for the parts of Siegmund and Siegfried, which are assigned to Niemann and Unger—the former well-nigh *passé*, the latter a beginner. Both are very tall, look their parts, and can shout with a vengeance, regardless of false intonation. But when I have said that, I have said all; their singing is rough, uncouth, uncivilised, and their acting is no less so. They are no musicians, nor are they artists. What a contrast to Gura, who takes the part of Gunther in *Götterdämmerung*, and who is every inch a refined artist!

And if the performances include many of the most distinguished ornaments of the profession, the audience does no less so. Men like Liszt, Helmholtz, and many others, are no mean representatives of art and science, and the audience is perhaps the most intelligent that ever listened to any performance. Royalty has largely patronised the undertaking, and everything seems to have combined to make it a great and well-merited success. In this modern Olympus, the Muses have at last anointed the maestro with myrrh, and set a garland of wool on his head; and the name of Bayreuth, formerly associated only with petty court intrigues, will henceforth be connected with Wagner's institution, the object of which is,

in his own language, to be a meeting-place of "the most distinguished artists for the purpose of a higher style of artistic performances than the course of their ordinary occupation can afford them."

And this year's festival has brilliantly accomplished this primary object of the undertaking. It will be recorded as a landmark in the history of music, and it has proved once more, if proof were wanted, that, as a reformer of modern opera, Wagner is truly "il maestro di color che sanno." C. P. S.

ROBERT SCHUMANN: HIS PIANOFORTE WORKS.

BY FR. NIECKS.

CHAPTER III.—OP. 1—23, 26, 28.

(Continued from page 118.)

THE "Three Romances," Op. 28, have experienced undeserved treatment at the hands of Schumann's biographers, who merely name them and then pass on without a word of comment, praise, or blame. Now I think with the composer that they are one of his best works. The moods and thoughts are not so interesting as those of the "Kreisleriana" and "Novelletten," but the delightful repose and quiet beauty which pervade this work give to it a charm of its own. The first two romances are the expression of serene pensiveness, calm yet warm, subdued and yet not colourless. In the third it is as if the composer made an effort to shake off this abstracted mood, and on looking around him found the earth covered with flowers, the May sun sending down his friendly rays, all Nature smiling—his heart was filled with gladness and love, his mind with playful and affectionate thoughts only transiently overcast by a shadow of sadness. If these words of mine should induce any one to make himself acquainted with these lovely pieces, I am confident he will remember me as one who has introduced to him a dear friend; they will comfort him in hours of heaviness, and sing with him in hours of rejoicing.

There is another work, Op. 32, "Scherzo, Gigue, Romanza, and Fughetta," which ought to have been added to those named at the head of this chapter, for it belongs to the same period—the first three numbers being composed in 1838, the last number in 1839. As the work contains the first published specimens of the composer's attempts in the imitative forms, it will not fail to interest the student; but apart from this it is not of great consequence. However, the pretty "Romanza" has made many friends, and has been often printed separately. The distinguishing characteristic of modern music—the ascendancy of harmony over counterpoint—is very strikingly exemplified in the gigue and fughetta, for this ascendancy of harmony makes itself felt not only by the supplanting of the contrapuntal forms, but also in these forms themselves. The starting-point of our forefathers was opposite to ours: they took melody for their basis, and by combination of melodies obtained harmony; we, on the other hand, take harmony for our basis, and from it evolve melody. The same may be seen in the theoretical works written

on the subject of counterpoint. Fux, Cherubini, and all the old theorists, for instance, begin with two-part counterpoint. Richter, one of the best writers on theory of our time, begins with four-part counterpoint. And this is not the whim of a man who wishes to do things differently from other people, but the result of exact observation. Richter showed himself in this a child of his time, to the spirit and requirements of which he adapted his method. But suppose you disapprove of this, and follow in your studies the method of the old masters, it will be still the same; you cannot help breathing the air which surrounds you.

However, the *gigue* and *fughetta* are hardly fair samples of what Schumann was able to do in this style. If you wish to see him at his best, you must turn to the "Six Fugues on the name of Bach," Op. 60, composed in 1845 (see Vol. III., p. 721, of Pauer's edition: "Six Fugues on the name of Bach, for the Piano or the Organ"—for the organ rather than the piano), and some of the "Studies for the Pedal Piano," Op. 58, composed in the same year (Vol. III., p. 688), wherein he proves himself a true disciple of Bach, the "matchless," "incommensurable," as Schumann calls him, whose works were his "daily Bible." By dint of genius Schumann was able to breathe into the rigid form of the fugue an appearance of life, and succeeded in infusing some of his individuality where common mortals can do no more than repeat the thoughts and expressions that have been thousands of times uttered by others before them. But after all, it may be asked, to what does the gain to art amount? and if it is a gain to art, is it not rather an indirect than a direct gain?

A musician who chooses the fugue form for the framework of his ideas, can only be true to his art in spite of this form. It is the spiritual contents which raise art above mere craft. It is the more or less of mental and emotional power which decides the rank of the individual work of art. Every art must at one time of its history be a craft with strict rules; but the spirit, as it begins to move within, slackens these trammels, and at last bursts them asunder. Even Bach attains in his fugues only the highest that could be attained in this form, but not the highest he was able to attain in art. Think only of this master's "Passion according to St. Matthew." Was it not, when you heard the introductory movement, "Come, ye daughters, weep with me," as if billowy floods rose against you, closed above you, and drowned you in an infinitude of sorrow? Was it not as if the voices that rose from the midst of this heaving sea, crying, "Have mercy upon us, O Jesus," lent words to your feelings, and gave relief to your oppressed heart, which, selfishness and pride being washed away, now saw itself in all its wretchedness and sinfulness? No fugue, be it ever so beautiful, can produce such an impression. How is that? *Pectus est quod facit musicum.* You were so deeply moved because the combining musician was the willing servant of the free-creating poet, the feeling and believing man. It is the effect produced, and not the difficulty of the means employed, which determines the value of a work of art. Bach shows himself as great a musician in the harmonisation of chorales as in the writing of fugues, and perhaps a greater poet. Did you ever calculate how much of your enjoyment of a fugue is due to your admiration of the composer's ingenuity, and your wonder at the power exhibited in overcoming in some degree the obstacles which are opposed to the free display of the higher spiritual faculties? Let me not be misunderstood. I am no disparager of Bach's fugues; they grow dearer to me every day as I more and more recognise the immeasurable wealth, not only of ingenuity, but also of

character and feeling, which lies buried in them. Still this is no reason why I should admit that the fugue form is to be put on an equality with or even above the developed sonata form, or other freer and more individual forms. If there must be fixed forms, the more elastic they are the better. As I have said before, the form of the fugue will in some instances, especially where choral masses are concerned, and an intense expression of the sentiment of a multitude is aimed at, be a legitimate form, and there may be other instances where it may be admissible; but in most cases the works written in this form can be looked on only as studies. They are in music what studies of drapery, and the human frame in its various foreshortenings, are in the sister art, and may indeed be interesting and not without flashes of genius, but after all are no more than the dead material, the soulless parts of some possible work of art. Thus it is that the great composers of modern times resort to this form as a beneficial discipline, or healthy sport, and when they make use of it for musico-poetical purposes, handle it with great freedom. They neither worship this relic, as we may call it, of a past age with blind superstition, nor condemn it with vulgar ignorance. To them it is a thing to be honoured, not worshipped; they think it venerable, not life-giving.

This discussion of the importance of the fugue form for our time has led me far away from the starting-point, the *gigue* and *fughetta*, with which, I must confess, the greatest part of my remarks has little or nothing to do. In fact, strictly speaking, the "Fughetta" cannot be said to be fugal writing at all, there being no independent melodies, but only a theme recurring wholly or partially in different parts and keys, accompanied by chords. But what is not applicable to the "Fughetta," is applicable to the "Fugues," some of which I have already alluded to, and others which have to be mentioned in the next chapter, where the remaining pianoforte works of Schumann will be shortly enumerated, and a general survey and characterisation of the composer's achievements in this portion of his life's work be attempted.

CHAPTER IV.—CONCLUSION.

THROUGHOUT the history of Schumann's artist-career you will notice how he throws himself always with all his might on one branch of his art. He begins with the piano. When this can no longer satisfy him, he composes songs (1840); from them he advances to symphonies and orchestral works generally; in 1842 we see him write chamber-music; in the following year he composes his first choral work, "Das Paradies und die Peri." There is a pause in 1844; the catalogue contains only one entry, viz.: "Epilogue to Goethe's *Faust*, for Soli Chorus, and Orchestra;" in 1845 he produces chiefly contrapuntal works: "Four Fugues for the Pianoforte," Op. 72; "Studies for the Pedal Piano," Op. 56; "Six Fugues on the name of Bach, for the Organ," Op. 60; "Sketches for the Pedal Piano," Op. 58; also the canon of Op. 124 (No. 20, V IV., p. 1,032, of Pauer's octavo edition), of which piece six fugues and studies are the most important. After this follows a varied succession of symphonies, overtures, trios, sonatas (pianoforte and violin), songs, pieces for the pianoforte with and without the accompaniment of other instruments, and last, but not least, a great number of choral works, including an opera, requiem, mass, and the music to *Faust*. Here again notice the many ballads for soli, chorus, and orchestra, which he composed during the last years of his active life; also the two works of sacred music—the "Requiem for Chorus and Orchestra," Op. 148; and the "Mass for Four-part Chorus, with the

accompaniment of the Orchestra," Op. 147, written in the same year, 1852.

Of the pieces for the pianoforte which he composed after the first period, the "Concerto in A minor," Op. 54, the first movement of which was written in 1841, the second and third in 1845, is the most important work. But this, as well as the less happy conceptions, the "Introduction and Allegro-Appassionata," Op. 92 (1849), and the "Concert-Allegro with Introduction," Op. 134 (1853), being for the pianoforte and orchestra, likewise also the other compositions for the pianoforte with the accompaniment of other instruments, are beyond the scope of these chapters. Confining ourselves to the works for the pianoforte alone, we find on examination that they are few in number and comparatively insignificant. The peculiar charm, the romantic spirit, and delightful freshness of his earlier works are only to be found in some instances, of which may be named the "Forest Scenes," more especially the last three numbers ("The Bird as Prophet," "Hunting Song," "Farewell"). Schumann wrote four series of pianoforte-duets—"Bilder aus Osten," Op. 66; "Twelve Pianoforte Pieces," Op. 85; "Ballscenen," Op. 109; "Kinderball," Op. 130. Of these the "Oriental Pictures" and the "Ball-scenes" are the most attractive. The former has even been arranged for two hands (by E. Pauer), which testifies to its great popularity. The beautiful "Andante and Variations" for two pianos, Op. 46, composed in 1843, has also to be numbered among the successful pianoforte compositions of Schumann's later time. These exceptions apart, his pianoforte style, in proportion as the combining musician gets the upper hand over the creating poet, loses the rich mellow colouring, and becomes hard and dry. The absence of poetical thought naturally made itself felt in the composer's style. This may be seen in the "Four Marches," Op. 76 (1849); in the "Three Fantasiestücke," Op. 111; in the "Morning Songs," in the "Seven Pieces in Fughetta Form."

His "Album for Young People," which has been already adverted to, finds its best critique in the favour it has received from young and old. It is a pity that teachers do not make more frequent use of it. Of course it cannot be gone straight through from beginning to end like a methodically arranged series of teaching-pieces, but almost all numbers might with advantage be introduced in a course of pianoforte instruction, some of them at the earliest stage, others somewhat later; a few only when the pupil has attained already a considerable proficiency. To compare them with the "Kinderscenen," and then say they are not so fine, is unfair. They could not be so. The reason why is obvious, and were it not, might be gathered from Schumann's remarks upon these pieces (see page 106 of the MONTHLY MUSICAL RECORD), and even from their names.

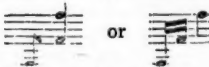

The "Leaves of Different Colours," Op. 99; the "Three Sonatas," Op. 118 (No. 1, "In remembrance of Julia;" No. 2, "To Eliza;" No. 3, "Dedicated to Mary"); and the "Album Leaves" are what may be called "wind-tossed leaves reclaimed," and occasional compositions, containing no doubt much that is charming (I will remind you only of the "Slumber Song"), but much more that is insignificant. Indeed, many of them are pieces which at the time they were composed Schumann may have rejected as of too slight value for publication, but yet thought it a pity to let them perish; the honorarium which he would receive from the publisher may also have been an inducement to collect them. For as Schumann says himself, in a letter written in 1843, "Formerly it did not matter to me whether the public took notice of me or not; when one has a wife and children one thinks differently. One has to think of the future; one wishes also to see the

fruits of one's work, not the artistic, but the prosaic, which are required for life; only reputation brings and increases these." And reputation having come, the publishers were of course anxious to publish and pay for anything he would offer, especially in the way of trifles.

Having reviewed all the composer's pianoforte works individually, and discussed them more or less, we may now consider them as a whole. In analysing a style we can only distinguish the grosser elements of which it is composed; the finer ones escape our observation, that is to say—for they make themselves felt in the compound—they are on account of their subtlety undefinable. However, this is not the only difficulty. In aesthetics we have not yet arrived at the scientific accuracy of chemistry, and yet this only could give us more than a vague notion of what we call such-and-such a style. For a new style is not formed only by the addition of new elements, which it would be easy to discover, but also, and perhaps chiefly, sometimes even solely, by the re-mixing of the old elements. Did any one ever ascertain the exact proportions in which the different elements are found together in any style? We know the whole, but not all its parts, just as after looking at a large building we have a general notion of the total effect, but remember with distinctness only the more prominent points and most striking features of it. Let me remark here that similarities in the style of one man with those of other men of the same time, are not so much conscious imitations as the consequence of kindred ways of thinking and feeling, for there is a style of the time as well as of the individual, the former comprising the latter, both affecting and modifying each other reciprocally. What gives character and life to style is the contents. The charm of Schumann's style lies in its being the truthful expression of an enthusiastic, loving, and truly poetic nature. It is worth noting how in proportion as his nature deepens his art becomes more and more sacred to him, till at last music is to him what poetry was to Elizabeth Browning, "as serious a thing as life itself." This is best illustrated by the works of which he brought out a second edition: the emendations and omissions of parts of the "Impromptu," the suppression of fantastic remarks in the "Davidsbündler," may teach the musician much.

And now let us try to ascertain what these grosser elements of Schumann's style, the more prominent points of his pianoforte technique are.

It often appears as if the peculiar notation of Schumann might be rendered more simple; but if you try you will find in most cases that the effect is no longer the same. Moscheles made some such objection to Schumann, which the latter answered thus: "You must make allowance for some things in my notation. I really do not know how to write the three A flats one above the other in any other

way. For  or  has a different

effect. The high A flat is only to sound softly after the others, and therefore I did not know how to write otherwise than thus:—



No doubt Schumann would have given similar answers to other objections of the same kind, and, I think, on the whole with justice. Still it must be admitted that the interlacing and crossing of parts, unless carefully rendered with light and shade, and perhaps in some cases even then, causes at times obscurity, where the eye must come to the assistance of the ear. This weakness is closely

connected with the composer's virtues, and is no less than these characteristic of his nature. Indeed, the peculiar mental characteristics of Schumann are mirrored in his style. The warmth of heart, the pure sensuousness find expression in the full extended chords. Were you to go over all the pianoforte literature since Dussek, who was one of the first to make use of the far-stretched chords, you would not find one who produced by means of them such mellow richness of tone, such Titianesque colouring. With most composers these chords have generally either a lumpishness or emptiness about them; with him they have either a soft transparent substantiality, or the glitter and elasticity of burnished steel. In connection with this I may also mention the distribution of parts, the assigning of the melody to the bass, as for instance in the *Novellette* No. 3:—



or to a middle part, as in the following passage from the "*Nachtstücke*":—



sometimes also its distribution among different parts all which is so unlike the common arpeggio trick introduced by Thalberg or Parish-Alvars, that I have already called it a kind of scoring, as it has an effect like that of different voices or instruments. See also "*Scenes of Childhood*," No. 12, "*The Child falling asleep*" (Vol. II., p. 366, of Pauer's edition.) The dreamy yearning, the losing himself in infinite longing, are manifested in the frequent syncopations, which sometimes also express a breathless excitement, in which case the accented part of the bar usually occupied by the bass-note is often left open, and the accompaniment or the melody and accompaniment continue again on the unaccented part of the bar. The "*Davidsbündler*" afford many different examples. I will quote heretwo passages from the last of the "*Novelletten*":—



Schumann's habit of playing much with the pedal raised must not be forgotten here, as it is related to the same characteristic.

The rich tracery of suspensions, changing and passing notes, point to the romantic transcendental in Schumann's nature; so does likewise the combination of the binary and ternary rhythm.

What gives especially a strong appearance of truthfulness to Schumann's music is the manner in which he commences his pieces; eschewing all formality he plunges at once *in medias res*. Not seldom he begins as if something else had gone before, just as a man who has been meditating will on a sudden turn round on his companion and startle him with a thought the drift of which the latter cannot at first understand; or he breaks out like one whose feelings have been long pent up, and cannot longer be restrained.



It would require a treatise by itself, were I to go into a detailed analysis of Schumann's achievements as a harmonist. What were then novelties, the unprepared dissonances, the successions of distantly-related keys and chords, need no longer be justified; they are recognised as legitimate, and indeed have become quite familiar to us. But what seems to be less understood is that such a revolution in practice—boldly begun by Beethoven, continued by Schumann and Chopin, and seemingly brought to its culminating point by Liszt and Wagner—necessitates also a like revolution in theory. What we require is a simplified system of harmony, first of all a simpler nomenclature. Many awe-inspiring and sorely puzzling chords of the composers of our day would become plain enough if, instead of speaking of chords of the eleventh, thirteenth, or of such-and-such an inversion of such-and-such a chord with such-and-such chromatically altered intervals, we would cease to look upon them as independent chords, and think of them only in connection with other chords of which they are retardations. So also many strange successions will find their explanation in an ellipsis. However, this is not the place to discuss this matter. At some other time I may perhaps be permitted to enlarge upon it, and explain my view in full.

And now a few words in conclusion. There is a notion pretty generally entertained that if Schumann had received a more systematic art-training he might have obtained a still greater success in his artist-career. This, however, seems to me questionable. In calculating such possibilities, the character of the individual has to be taken into account. What is good for one may be hurtful for another; and what is a gain in one respect may be a loss in another. It cannot be denied that if Schumann had gone through the usual course of studies before publishing, the world would not have seen such immature compositions as the "Air on the name of Abegg, with Variations," the "Papillons," the "Intermezzi;" and it would not have lost much; but very likely he would not have given us the "Davidsbündler," the "Carnaval," the "Kreisleriana," the "Novelletten" either, and this would have been a grievous loss indeed. We are too apt to confound form with particular kinds of form. Now a piece may have an excellent form, and yet not belong to any of the conventional forms we know. Thus also in other branches of our art, systematised fashions are often mistaken for invariable laws of Nature. Take, for instance, a survey of the history of harmony, its systems and their vicissitudes. Now if Schumann had learned his lesson well, he would have had a great deal to unlearn before he could have done justice to his peculiar gift; and, as we all know, it is more difficult to unlearn than to learn. Schumann's Sonatas, Op. 11, 14, and 22, leave much to be desired; but their shortcomings are due to their pretension to be what they were not and could not be. There is a jarring of contents and form. Still these attempts to create larger works, although not wholly successful, had a beneficial influence upon those that succeeded them. The "Kreisleriana" and "Novelletten" would not have been possible without such discipline, by which he strengthened his mental grasp. His first compositions are short and simple pieces; here we have larger and complex pictures. I for my part do not regret that Schumann did not receive what is generally considered the proper preparation for a composer, for it is my opinion that it would have shorn the poet of much of his originality and spontaneity; and it is questionable whether even at such a cost he could have attained the highest degree of excellence as regards classical form. His was a peculiar nature, and must not be judged by the common standard. The great merit of Schumann is to have

opened a new vein of musical thought. Perhaps he has not always been able to give to this thought that perfection of form of which it is capable; but in some instances the nature of the thought may have precluded a nearer approach to perfection. There are qualities which in their highest state of perfection are incompatible with each other; they can be joined only in a diluted, inferior degree. Can you imagine the emotional expressiveness of the later Greek sculptors combined with the sublime grandeur of a Phidias? How is it possible to combine the different qualities of a Palestrina and Pergolesi, a Bach and Haydn, or even a Mozart and Beethoven, or a Mozart and Gluck? They exclude each other to a certain extent. An artist either has a *genre*—that is, he excels in one speciality—or he has one of those wide-reaching powerful minds that sum up individuals and ages. Schubert is greater in song than Beethoven; Chopin has done things which Beethoven could not have accomplished; and yet who doubts that he is greater than either of them, and still will tower in his solitary grandeur when they and all that pertains to them have crumbled into dust? Schumann belongs rather to the former than to the latter class; he rather possesses some qualities in a high state of perfection than unites many in complete harmoniousness; his music has more of the individual than of the universal.

However, although I hold that the contents of Schumann's works was not in all instances capable of a perfection of form such as we find in the works of his contemporary, Mendelssohn, I admit that his thought might have found a more perfect expression if he had allowed it to crystallise. At times one may say of it, *Elle n'a pas assez passé par l'âme*. One cause of this was perhaps his composing at the piano. Wasielewski informs us that Schumann did so up to the time he wrote his Op. 50. It must be evident that one who works thus cannot have the same grasp of his subject, and attain the same unity, harmoniousness, and clearness of structure, as he who allows his thoughts to grow, accessory ideas to amalgamate with the principal, till at last a perfect whole is the result, and the composer—to use Mozart's words, who gives in one of his letters an interesting description of the process of crystallisation—overlooks the whole at a glance, as if it were a fine picture, or a beautiful human figure, and hears it in his imagination, not bit by bit as it must come afterwards, but the whole at the same time. I hope this will not discourage some young composer; let him rather try how far practice will enable him to imitate Mozart, and if he fails, he may comfort himself with the knowledge that he has good company; and let him remember that Mozart was the clearest head, although not the deepest, among the musicians the world has as yet seen.

Well, let it be granted that Schumann wrote too fast, that he was too chary of the *limæ labor*, then we come again to the question—and it is well worth asking again—how much would have been lost of the precious metal of spontaneous thought by these filings? Would the man not have lost as much as, or more than, the artist gained? Considering the composer's nature, I feel inclined to think that the gain would not have counterbalanced the loss. Nevertheless, the more Schumann wrote, the more ease he attained in expressing himself clearly. As his style formed itself, as his mind widened, the form became clearer too. Remember, also, that his art, like all romantic and most modern art, is picturesque rather than plastic. But whatever your final estimate of Schumann may be, you cannot deny that he has produced much that has enriched the art, and achieved much that will endure. "Truly," he says in one of his letters, "I

have toiled and striven for twenty years, heedless of praise and blame, towards the one goal—to be called a true servant of art." Oh, that all artists would lay these words to their hearts, and following his noble example, place gain and fleeting reputation after the true interests and advancement of art!

HEINRICH HEINE AS A MUSICAL CRITIC.

As the author of a vast number of beautiful songs, which have been set to music by Mendelssohn, Schumann, and others, the name of Heinrich Heine must be familiar to us all. That at one time of his life he was actively employed as a musical critic is probably not so well known. The interesting "Life, Work, and Opinions of Heinrich Heine," by William Stigand, recently published by Messrs. Longmans, Green, and Co., suggests some comments upon, and enables us to offer our readers some samples of his activity in this direction, which, we think, will not be found to be without interest.

From the following whimsical account which he has left on record of the popularity which Weber's *Der Freischütz* at once achieved on its production in Berlin, and of the persecution which he suffered from morn to night from constantly hearing the "Jungfern Kranz" sung in all directions, it is difficult to decide how far he was gifted by nature or qualified by his acquirements to fulfil the duties of a musical critic. It is the first of his musical writings which we come upon in this book, and amusing enough to bear reproduction in full. He writes:—

"In however good a temper I get up in the morning, the cheerfulness is immediately driven out of me, for even at this hour the school-boys pass my window whistling the 'Jungfrau Kranz.' An hour does not pass before I hear that the daughter of my hostess is up with her 'Jungfrau Kranz.' I hear my barber then singing himself up-stairs to the tune of the 'Jungfrau Kranz.' The washerwoman's little girl then comes humming 'Lavendel, Myrt, and Thymian.' So it goes on. My head swims. I cannot endure it. I rush out of the house and throw myself with disgust into a hackney coach, happy that I can hear no singing while the wheels are rattling. I get out at Miss ———'s, and ask if she is at home. The servant runs to see. Yes. The door opens; the sweet creature sits at a pianoforte, and receives me with the words—

"Wo bleibt der schmucke Freiermann,
Ich kann ihn kaum erwarten."

"You sing like an angel!" I cry, in a spasmodic way. "I will begin again from the beginning," lisps the good creature; and she twists me again her 'Jungfrau Kranz,' and twists, and twists, until I twist myself like a worm with unspeakable pangs, and cry out in anguish of soul, 'Help! help!' After which the accursed song never quits me all day; my most pleasant moments are embittered—even as I sit at midday at dinner, the singer Heinsius trolls it out at dessert. The whole afternoon I am strangled with 'Weichen blauer Seide.' There the 'Jungfrau Kranz' is played off on the organ by a cripple. Here it is fiddled off by a blind man. In the evening the whole horror is let loose. Then is there a piping, a howling, a falsettoing, and gurgling, and always the same tune. The song of Kaspar or the 'Huntsman's Chorus' may be howled in from time to time by an illuminated student or ensign, for a change; but the 'Jungfrau Kranz' is permanent: when one has ended it, another begins it. Out of every house it springs upon me; everybody sings it with his own variation; yea, I almost fancy the dogs in the street howl in it. . . . However, do not imagine that the melody is really bad; on the contrary, it has reached its popularity through excellence. *Mais toujours perdrix!* You understand me: the whole of the 'Freischütz' is excellent, and surely deserves the consideration given to it by all Germany."

It was, however, later in life that, apparently tired of the office which he had held as yearly chronicler of the decline of painting, Heine turned his attention to music, which, in the decline of the art of poetry, began from that time to assume that overwhelming dominion over the public taste which it has maintained up to the present hour. Music, however (Mr. Stigand writes), since the days of Heine has been ever acquiring a wider and more extensive sphere. The honours which have been paid at times to silly sopranos and fatuous tenors would have been extravagant if they had been paid to the heroes and redeemers of mankind—not to speak of the prodigal fortunes which a giddy public has poured at their feet.

Deploing the decline of painting and sculpture, Heine writes in 1841:—

"Only the younger sister-art, Music, lifts herself up with original individual power. Will she keep her place long? or will she soon again fall down? These are questions which only a later generation can answer."

He goes on to explain that the musical season terrifies more than it delights him; that people are being simply drowned in music, and that in Paris there is not a single house wherein one can take refuge as in an ark against the deluge of sound. "The noble tone-science," he says, "is overflowing our whole existence; this is for me a very critical sign, and brings upon me sometimes a fit of ill-humour which degenerates into the most morose injustice against our great *maestri* and *dilettanti*." That he was, at least, an honest critic, and not above self-criticism, seems apparent from this; and undoubtedly some allowance should be made for the delicacy of the nerves of a man who, when he was staying with a friend, was obliged to ask to have the clock stopped in the next room to the one in which he passed the night, in order that he might get to sleep.

Of the pianoforte, of which he speaks as "the instrument of martyrdom, whereby the present elegant world is racked and tortured for all its affectations," he seems sometimes to have had a special horror. Writing in 1843, he says:—

"The *matadors* of the present season are Messieurs Sivori and Drey-schock. The first is a fiddler, and as such I rank him above the last—the terrible piano-thrasher. In the case of the violinists, their *virtuosity* is not altogether the result of finger-dexterity and of pure technical skill, as with the piano-players. The violin is an instrument which has almost human caprices; and has, so to speak, sympathetic relations with the mood of the performer. The smallest discomfort, the lightest disturbance of the spirits, a breath of emotion, finds in it an immediate echo; and such may be the case because the violin, pressed close to the breast, participates in the beating of the heart. This, however, is only the case with artists who really have a heart in their breast which does beat, and also, above all, have a soul. The more prosy and the more heartless the violin-player is, so much the more regular will his execution be, and he can reckon on the obedience of his fiddle-bow at any hour, and in any place. But this belated certainty of execution is only the result of spiritual mediocrity, and the greatest masters especially have been those whose faculty of playing not unfrequently depended on outward and inward influences. I have never heard anybody play better, and also at times nobly worse, than Paganini; and the same thing I can say of Ernst. . . . As for Drey-schock, he has earned great praise; and I report truly, that public opinion has proclaimed him to be one of the greatest of piano *virtuosi*. He offers a hellish spectacle."

However, that Heine was able to do honour to really great artists on the piano is seen by his notices of Liszt, Thalberg, and Chopin, with each of whom he was intimately acquainted. Of Liszt he writes:—

"He is indisputably the artist in Paris who finds the most unlimited enthusiasm, as well as the most zealous opponents. It is a characteristic sign that no one speaks of him with indifference. Without power can no one in this world excite either favourable or hostile passions. One must possess fire to excite men to hatred as well as to love. That which testifies especially for Liszt is the complete esteem with which even his enemies speak of his personal worth. He is a man of whimsical but noble character, unselfish, and without deceit. Especially remarkable are his spiritual proclivities; he has great taste for speculative ideas, and he takes even more interest in the essays of the various schools which occupy themselves with the solution of the great problems of heaven and earth than in his art itself. . . . It is, however, praiseworthy, this indefatigable yearning after light and divinity; it is a proof of his taste for the holy, for the religious."

Notwithstanding his liking for Liszt personally, Heine confesses that his music, which on one occasion he likens to a scene from the Apocalypse, did not impress him agreeably. On the occasion of a subsequent visit of Liszt to Paris, he seems to have become more reconciled to his playing. He writes:—

"Yes, Franz Liszt, the pianist of genius, whose playing often appears to me as the melodious agony of a spectral world, is again here, and giving concerts which exercise a charm which borders on the fabulous. By his side all piano-players, with the exception of Chopin, the Raphael of the pianoforte, are as nothing. In fact, with the exception of this last-named artist alone, all the other piano-players whom we hear this year in countless concerts are only piano-players—their only merit is the dexterity with which they handle the machine of wood and wire. With Liszt, on the contrary, people think no more about the 'difficulty overcome': the piano

disappears, and music is revealed. In this respect has Liszt, since we last heard him, made the most astonishing progress. With this advantage he combines now a repose of manner which we failed to perceive in him formerly. If, for example, he played a storm on the pianoforte, we saw the lightning flicker about his features, his limbs fluttered as with the blast of a storm, and his long locks of hair dripped as with real showers of rain. Now, when he plays the most violent storm, he still seems exalted above it, like the traveller who stands on the summit of an Alp while the tempest rages in the valley; the clouds lie deep below him, the lightning curls like snakes at his feet, but his head is uplifted smilingly into the pure ether."

Heine recognised that of all composers Liszt found Beethoven most in accordance with his taste. "Beethoven especially," he says, "has advanced the spiritualism of art to that tuneless agony of the world of vision—to that annihilation of nature which fills us with a terror which I cannot conceal, although my friends shake their heads over it. It seems to me a characteristic circumstance that Beethoven was deaf at the end of his days, so that not even the invisible tone-world had any reality in sound for him. His tones were but reminiscences of a tone—the ghost of sound which had died away, and his last productions bore on their brow the ghostly hand of dissolution."

In spite of all his genius, Liszt encountered in Paris the opposition of several musicians, who gave the laurel to his rival, Thalberg, whom Heine characterises as a "noble, soul-full, intelligent, gentle-humoured, quiet German," as compared with the "wild, storm-lightning, volcanic, heaven-storming" Liszt.

Of Chopin Heine speaks as not only having been the pianist most *fitted* next to Liszt, but also as a composer who has reached the highest point. He gives the following brief but interesting account of him:—

"Chopin was born of French parents in Poland, and has had a part of his education in Germany. The influences of these nationalities render his personality a very remarkable phenomenon; he has especially assimilated the best which characterises the three peoples. Poland gave him its chivalrous feeling and its historical sorrow; France, its light charm, its grace; Germany gave him its romantic depth of feeling. Nature, however, gave him that delicate, slender, somewhat lank form, the noblest of hearts, and genius. Yes, to Chopin must we ascribe genius in the fullest sense of the word. He is not only a *virtuoso*, he is also a poet; he can bring the poetry forth to view which lives in his soul; he is a tone-poet, and nothing resembles the enjoyment which he procures for us when he is sitting at the piano and improvises. He is then neither a Pole, nor a Frenchman, nor a German; he betrays a far higher origin. People observe then that he is a denizen of the country of Mozart, Raphael, Goethe—that his true fatherland is the dream-realm of poetry. When he sits at the piano and improvises, then it seems to me as though a fellow-countryman, out of the loved poetic home, came and related to me the most curious things which have passed there during my absence. Oftentimes I would interrupt him with questions. 'How fares it with the beautiful water-fairy who knew how to wind her silver veil so coquettishly about her green locks?' 'Does the white-bearded god of the sea ever persecute her with his foolish rejected love?' 'Are the roses about our old home still so flamingly proud?' 'Do the trees sing still so fairly in the moonlight?'"

From the performers we turn to the composers, of whom Heine has handed down to us many sketches, from which the future historian of music may glean many characteristic details of Spontini, Rossini, Meyerbeer, Berlioz, and the leading musical creators of his time. The following description of the grand but rugged genius of Berlioz is a good example of the fancy of the poet, applied to the interpretation of the genius of the musician:—

"*A tout seigneur tout honneur.* We begin to-day with Berlioz, whose first concert commenced the musical season, and was regarded, in fact, as its overture. Those pieces—more or less new—which here were set before the public found due applause, and even the most sluggish spirits were torn along by the might of his genius, which reveals itself in all the creations of the great master. Here was a sweep of airy which betrayed no ordinary singing-bird. There was a colossal nightingale, a philomel of the size of an eagle, such as there may have been in the primeval world. Yes, the music of Berlioz has, in my opinion, a smack of the primeval, if not antediluvian, world; and it reminds me of races of beasts which have become extinct; of fabulous kingdoms and their impetious; of impossibilities towered up high; of Babylon; of the hanging gardens of Semiramis; of Nineveh; of the miraculous works of Mizraim, as we see them in the pictures of Martin the Englishman. Indeed, if we look round for an analogy in the art of painting, we find the most sympathetic similarity between Berlioz and the wild Briton—the same excuse for the monstrous, the gigantic—for material immensity. With the one the sharpest effects of light and shade, with the other the most crushing instrumentation; with the one little melody, with

the other little sense of colour; with both little beauty, and no gentleness of humour. Their works are neither classic nor romantic; they remind us neither of Greece nor of the Catholic Middle Ages; but they transplant us far deeper back—to the Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian period of architecture, to the passion for massiveness, of which it was the expression."

The picture which he gives of Spontini in Paris, after he had outlived his productive power and his reputation, and had lost his place as royal director of music in Berlin, is not an agreeable one. He tells, however, a good story of his being found one day at the Louvre before a huge mummy, which he thus apostrophised:—

"Unhappy Pharaoh! thou art the guilty author of my misfortune. Hadst thou refused to permit the children of Israel to go forth from the land of Egypt, or hadst thou had them all drowned in the Nile, then had I not been driven out of Berlin by Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn, and I had even remained director of the great opera and of the court concert. Unhappy Pharaoh! weak king of the crocodiles! through thy half-measures has it happened that I now am in the main a ruined man, and that Moses, and Halevy, and Mendelssohn, and Meyerbeer have been victorious!"

Heine's essay on the comparative merits of Rossini and Meyerbeer goes too far into the matter to allow of the reproduction of its substance here. It must suffice to state that he gave the preference to Rossini.

A symphony of Mendelssohn's, brought out in Paris in 1844, gave Heine an opportunity of discovering the genius of this composer. What he wrote is much to the point:—

"Mendelssohn always affords us an opportunity of touching on the highest problems of aesthetics. Especially in this case are we put in mind of the great problem of aesthetics—What is art, and what is falsehood? We are astonished in this master at his great talent for form—for that *stylistic* faculty for assimilating what is most extraordinary; at his charmingly beautiful nature; at his fine *liard-ear*; at his tender, sensitive *outrance*; and at his earnest, I may almost say passionate, indifference. If we seek in a sister-art for an analogous appearance, we find it in poetry, and it is called Ludwig Tieck. This master also had a capacity for reproducing that which is excellent both in writing and in reading; he understood also how to manufacture the *naïve*, and yet he has never composed anything which has subdued the crowd and remained living in their hearts. The gifted Mendelssohn, however, has a fairer chance of creating something permanent, but not in the *domain* where truth and passion are requisite—that is, on the stage. So Ludwig Tieck, in spite of his strong desire, could never accomplish a dramatic work."

At this date probably none will entirely agree with the opinions here advanced. That Heine lacked the practical musical training necessary for an adequate fulfilment of the duties of a musical critic cannot be overlooked, but that his intuitive genius and extraordinary perceptive powers stood in good stead cannot for a moment be questioned.

With these few specimens of his powers as a musical critic before us, we cannot therefore but think that Mr. W. Stigand would do well to publish a complete edition of Heine's collected writings on musical subjects.

RUBINSTEIN'S "TOWER OF BABEL."

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

HEIDELBERG, August.

"THE man that hath no music in his soul," says the poet, "is only fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils; let no such man be trusted." A very deep meaning underlies this apparently sweeping language; but if it be true in its ordinary acceptation, if an utter absence of anything worthy of the name of good music be a test, then the good city of Heidelberg must indeed be a den of criminals. I have not examined the criminal statistics of the town, but I am inclined to presume in favour of the inhabitants; for they look almost too dull and phlegmatic to be capable of any atrocity, save perhaps that of fleeing tourists. The lovely scenery that surrounds them, the noble old castle that towers above them, the turbulent Neckar that sweeps through their famous bridge, the vine that grows upon their hills, the nightingale that sings in their woods—all these could inspire Turner; they could inspire James, whose irrepressible novel stares us in the face from every shop-window, but they could

not inspire the sedate Heidelbergers, their native bard is yet to come. For study, the "learned leisure" of Heidelberg is truly delightful, but those who expect to find in music relaxation after work are, at least at this time of the year, doomed to grievous disappointment. There is indeed a band dignified with the name of "Municipal Orchestra," which ministers daily to the musical wants of the town. But if its performances in the Castle gardens are very cheap, they are also very bad. And yet the citizens, their knitting spouses and their offspring; the students in the white caps, the students in the red caps, and the students in the yellow caps, resembling birds of Oriental plumage, listen to these performances with marvellous composure; nay, so riveted are they at times in an obscure polka, or in a sentimental song arranged for the band, that they almost stand in need of Laputan flappers to bring them back to their habitual matter-of-fact regions. But, it may be asked, if Heidelberg is hopeless, why not visit the royal and ducal theatres which are the pride of the various miniature capitals in the vicinity? Yes, gentle reader, those royal and ducal theatres were my hope, but they did not prove my stay. Did I not on my arrival hasten to the "Königstuhl," and, beholding the magnificent panorama beneath me, did I not exclaim, "Sing, ye Carlsruheites, ye Mannheimites, ye Darmstadtites, and ye Stuttgartites, sing us one of the songs of your Zion!" No answer; for, alas! their temples are closed, and their minstrels are resting on their laurels! Nor should we grudge them their rest from labour. Are they not hard-worked enough? And is it not much more important that they should have a holiday than that the craving of a few disappointed individuals should be satisfied? In the universal dearth of music at this time of the year, the recent performance of Rubinstein's *Tower of Babel* at Düsseldorf stands out as a bright spot; and the work itself is so novel and so remarkable that it deserves more than a passing notice.

Although the *Tower of Babel* was performed as an oratorio, I may at once state that it is not an oratorio, not a cantata, but a *bond fide* musical drama, or, as Rubinstein himself styles it, "a biblical opera in one act." It will be remembered that he has lately given the same title to his *Paradise Lost*; but this was an after-thought rather than originally intended; for this work has all the characteristics of an oratorio; there are, moreover, no dramatic incidents in it; nor has he laid down any directions relating to the performance. The *Tower of Babel*, on the other hand, was written not for the concert-room, but for the stage; and, as may be seen from the directions in the score, for a stage of no mean dimensions. These directions are very precisely given; and the following may serve as an outline of the intended dramatic action:

In the background of the scene appears the Tower of Babel, its top reaching above the stage; sheds, huts, implements, building materials, &c., cover the space round about and in front of the tower; on the right of the proscenium is seen Nimrod's Mound, crowned by a gigantic tree, from which a tam-tam is suspended. The people, grouped about the tower, are asleep; the day begins to dawn. An overseer appears with two trumpeters, and the call having been given, he summons the people to work; the fires are lighted, "to make brick for stone, and slime for mortar;" and soon all hands are at work. Amidst this busy scene Nimrod arrives on the mound, and contemplating the progress of the tower, glories in the expectation of soon ascending it to behold the Creator. Among his followers is Abram, who calls upon the mighty monarch to abstain from a design which he cannot hope to accomplish with impunity; but Nimrod, incensed at the boldness of a mean shepherd, orders him to be cast into the fire. The people stop their work, and hasten to obey Nimrod's command; but hardly has Abram been led to the flames, when angels appear from above to protect him; the fire suddenly subsides, the smoke disappears, and Abram emerges from the flames unharmed. Great is Nimrod's consternation at this miracle; greater that of the people, who soon divide into their several tribes, of which each claims the miracle for its own God. The tam-tam is sounded; at Nimrod's bidding the conflict is stayed, and the people reluctantly resume their work. But now the angels again appear; "Let us go down," they sing, "and there confound their

language." The scene suddenly darkens; Abram predicts the approaching vengeance of Heaven; Nimrod in vain orders the affrighted people to throw the daring shepherd from the tower; and before he can enforce his command the tower, amid thunder and lightning, falls to the ground with a terrific crash. The people fly in all directions; Abram alone is seen kneeling in prayer; and Nimrod, overawed by the terrible scene, at last acknowledges that he cannot cope with the Deity. Three dissolving views, accompanied by the chorus behind the scene, then cross the stage in succession, representing the exodus of the Shemites, the Hamites, and the Japhethites. This over, the scene again represents the plain in the land of Shinar; a rainbow appears, spanning the background. Nimrod and his followers gradually gather in the foreground, and kneel down facing the rainbow; the heavens open; the celestial legions appear and shed their dazzling radiance on the scene; at the same time, the infernal hosts are seen rising from below; and amid the allelujahs of the angels, the praises of the people, and the defiant shouts of Satan's host, the scene is brought to a close.

Such is, as I have said, the intended dramatic action. But whether the *Tower of Babel* will ever be performed in this way, is a different thing altogether. That it is not impossible to do so, may safely be asserted; and ere this is printed, Wagner's Bayreuth performances will have convinced many an incredulous spectator that nowadays the stage manager can do anything if only the needful is forthcoming. But the question arises, where is this to end? Wagner wanted to produce the *Nibelungen*; no theatre was available for the purpose, and so he built a theatre for himself. Who knows whether Rubinstein does not propose to erect a temple of his own in the steppes of Russia! And why not? There will be no want of space, at all events. Yes, the day may be at hand when we shall be triumphantly told that, as every ancient god had his own temple, so every modern composer ought to have his own theatre. *Qui vivra verra.*

But if the dramatic conception of this work gives proof of a most fertile imagination, the musical conception of it does no less so. The *Tower of Babel* is eminently characteristic of Rubinstein. It exhibits once more his marvellous facility in writing, the readiness, the volubility, the ingenuity of his style. But it exhibits, in parts, also a fragmentary, spasmodic, off-hand workmanship. The libretto being remarkably well put together, he probably applied himself to his task without very profound reflection; parts of the work were probably written on the spur of the moment, having, like some of his compositions, almost the flippancy of an after-dinner speech about them. "There it is," he seems to say, "take it with its faults, or leave it alone. But whatever you do, don't ask me to alter or re-write it." We meet in the *Tower of Babel*, generally speaking, vigorous and arresting themes; the characteristic colouring of the scenes he wishes to describe is in parts extremely beautiful; but some of the choruses weary by their excessive length. There is unquestionably too much ensemble; and the hearer longs not only for a few more "full stops," but for a few more airs. Nor does the recitative, often monotonous, compensate for their absence.

The part of Nimrod is written for bass, that of Abram for tenor, and that of the overseer for baritone. Rubinstein has found no room for a soprano or alto solo. And why this gap in a work intended for the theatre? There is every reason to suppose that Nimrod was by no means a good hater of the fair sex. Nor are the characters of this "first monarch" and of Abram drawn with particular felicity. The composer has not infused sufficient mettle into either of them, and Nimrod is more a modern namby-pamby Shah than the "mighty hunter before the Lord." The short four-part phrases of the angels are set for children's voices, and stand out very clearly from the gigantic choruses in which the work abounds.

The first chorus of the people, "An's Werk, an's Werk," is very powerful; so is the chorus (for male voices) of Nimrod's followers, preceding Abram's delivery from the flames, "Schon lecken die Flammen." Then comes the double chorus of the nations contending for the miracle, followed by the fugue movement, "Ihr sollt vor unserm Gott Euch beugen." In this last double chorus Rubinstein has worked himself into a perfect

maze of fugue; it is more astounding than judicious; and though the theme is very vigorous and characteristic, the effect of the whole is seriously marred by its excessive length. The instrumental *pièce de résistance* is the destruction of the tower. Here Rubinstein proves himself to be, for good or for evil, a master of programme-music. It is his element, and he revels in it. No one who knows this intermezzo will be inclined to dispute that the artillery of modern instrumentation can describe with a vengeance thunder and lightning, the heaving and trembling of the Tower of Babel, the sudden crash, and the dreadful groan with which it thunders to the ground! It is refreshing to turn from this somewhat bewildering scene to what is undoubtedly the most characteristic and interesting part of the whole work—the intermezzo representing the exodus of the nations. To the chorus of the Shemites (for trebles and tenors in unison) the composer has imparted a drawling, gloomy character; that of the Hamites (for altos and basses in unison) is marked by a lighter rhythm and by a gipsy, nomadic tinge; while the third chorus, that of the Japhethites (in four parts), surprises by its modern, idyllic, almost Mendelssohnean colouring. This intermezzo is truly beautiful both in taste and form, and presents a perfect scene, pleasing by its variety, originality, freshness, and notably by its adequate length. Then follows Abram's great air, "O freudig seliges Vereinen," a specimen of Rubinstein's happiest and most attractive style—simple, transparent, intelligible, and melodious. It is much to be regretted that the publisher does not condescend to offer either this air or the one in the *Paradise Lost* ("Schon hat der Himmel") separately to the public; for they deserve to be more generally known. The triple chorus of the celestial hosts, of Nimrod and his people, and of the infernal legions forms the somewhat lengthy finale of the work.

Such are the outlines of this very remarkable composition. How is it, it may well be asked, that the effect of the whole does not come up to the effect produced by parts of it; that in spite of its many luminous points, we feel as if something were wanting to make the success complete, to make the work really a great one? Because it lacks evenness. Like a volcanic eruption, it is interesting, arresting, brilliant; but the crater, as if worked at high pressure, ejects beautiful crystals and slag pell-mell; and to separate the valuable from the worthless would be much too irksome a task for a headlong genius like Rubinstein. Hence it is that in such a work as his *Tower of Babel* he bewilders, he overpowers, he charms, he enraptures, he wears—*and all this in the space of an hour and a half.* It is not the pedantic cleanness of Mendelssohn, not the intellectual laboriousness of Brahms one would like to see in Rubinstein's compositions, but a more judicious distribution of his materials, more regularity, more steadiness. And in this respect his *Maccabees* is far superior to both the *Paradise Lost* and the *Tower of Babel*; let us hope that his *Nero*, which he proposes to bring out in Paris and Berlin, continues in the path of the *Maccabees*. The performance of Rubinstein's more important works will always gain immensely by his co-operation and personal direction—a proof that his music is essentially what Continental writers are so fond of calling "subjective." It is by no means advisable to encumber musical phraseology with such cloudy terms, but as applied to Rubinstein the term has its distinct meaning, for much of his music requires his own interpretation to bring its merits home to the hearer. And of this I cannot mention a more striking instance than the lukewarm, lifeless and spiritless performance of his "dramatic symphony" at the Philharmonic last season. What a contrast to the performance of the same work (whatever its merits or demerits) by the Gewandhaus band in Leipzig, under Rubinstein's personal direction!

The recent performance of the *Tower of Babel* was not perhaps so brilliant a success as the first which Rubinstein conducted personally four years ago; but all critics agree that on this, as on former occasions, the city of Düsseldorf fully vindicated its great musical reputation. The chorus numbered 418, the instruments, including the organ, 66, making, with the soloists, 490 performers, under the direction of Tausch, their indefatigable conductor.

London has recently made such rapid strides in music, and so much has been done for the diffusion of the more advanced

modern schools, that the time may not be far distant when the public will be made acquainted, if only in the form of oratorio, with Rubinstein's biblical works. Nothing indeed is to be hoped for from the conductors of "Grand Festivals;" they are not happy unless they can vary the *Elijah* and the *Messiah* with the *Messiah* and the *Elijah*. The most they condescend to do is occasionally to gain an ephemeral success for the work of some living composer of local reputation; nay, they actually refuse to conduct if the name of Bach or Schumann is to disgrace the programme of the festival. It is not to these, but it is to the promoters and the conductors of such luminous performances as those of Bach's *Minor Mass* and Liszt's *St. Elizabeth* in London, and of Brahms's *Requiem* in Cambridge, that the lover of progressive art looks for the diffusion of classical and modern works, of which the old indolent routine shirks the risk and responsibility; they are the pioneers of progress, and to them applies Longfellow's advice:—

"Be bold, be bold! and everywhere be bold!
Be not too bold! Yet better the excess
Than the defect."

C. P. S.

Foreign Correspondence.

MUSIC IN VIENNA.

(FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

VIENNA, August 12th, 1876.

As I have already related, the Hofoper had to fight against unexpected calamities at the end of the season. When I mentioned *Robert* and *Lohengrin* as the last two performances, I was too sanguine in anticipating the prompt execution of the programme. Deprived of so many singers, it was audacious enough to announce two operas of such calibre as *Robert* and *Lohengrin*; yet it was still more astonishing to be able in a few hours' time, in consequence of the sudden illness of one singer (Frau Kupfer, announced as Alice), to fill the evening with another opera of importance. It was the *Flying Dutchman* which appeared suddenly as the help in trouble, profiting by another Gastspiel, Fräulein Bretfeld as Senta. The last performance of *Lohengrin* was in several respects interesting; besides two Gastspiele, Fräulein Bretfeld as Elsa, and Fräulein Burenne as Ortrud, there was Herr Alexy, who performed for the first time the rôle of Telramund, and Herr Nawiasky, just engaged, who for the first time tasted the hot stage as the Herald. Herr Alexy, indeed, surprised by the artistic rendering of his task, whereas Herr Ephraim Nawiasky (from Kowno), a few weeks ago still a pupil of the Conservatoire, where his imposing voice was much admired, suffered from the momentary pangs of a first appearance in a large opera house. Herr Müller, who studied the rôle of Lohengrin under Wagner himself on his last visit in Vienna, again showed himself the earnest artist. It is now vacation—director, régisseur, painter, machinist, members of the orchestra, and chorus are gone to Bayreuth. It is quite sure that next winter we shall have the *Walküre* as the first part of the *Nibelungen* drama. Among other novelties in view are promised the operas *Falkner*, *Dalila*, *Das Goldene Kreuz*, and the ballet *Sylvia*, which was so well received in Paris.

The Conservatoire has finished another school-year, and has published its annual report. The public examinations have been most favourable for the fame of the institution. There was one meeting for the drama, and one for the opera school, and two performances in singing and instrumental music for those pupils who were rewarded with first prizes. The performances on the little stage consisted of scenes from the operas *Huguenots*, *Favoritin*, *Don Pasquale*, *Troubadour*, *Maskenball*, *Glöckchen des Eremiten*, *Czaar und Zimmermann*, *Carmen*; the orchestra being composed of the pupils, as likewise on the said last two performances. There were performed compositions on the organ (Bach), for the piano (Weber, Chopin, Schumann, Hiller, Mozart, Mendelssohn), for violin (Joachim, Bach), French horn (Spohr), songs (Beriot, Meyerbeer, Nicolai, Gounod), and orchestra (parts of two symphonies). Among the pupils who excelled most by talent and diligence are mentioned the ladies Baier, Riegl, Schell, Kaulich (singing), the ladies Haus, Dudos,

Károlyi, Kämpf, Sirk, Reisser, and Herr Tomka (piano); Herr Steudner (piano and organ), Herr Wunderer (French horn), Herr Windler, Auspitz, Siebert (violin), Herr Raimann and Frl. Weiss (composition). In the Schauspielschule, the ladies Wessely, Tullinger, Bacon, Hamm, who are all engaged for theatres in Germany. From the singing class, Frl. Ida Baier is engaged as operetta singer at the Carl Theatre in Vienna, and Frl. Kaulich for the Hofoper. The Conservatoire has numbered fifty-six professors and 696 pupils. It was the twenty-fifth school-year under the guidance of Director Herr Josef Hellmesberger. The loss of Dr. A. W. Ambrose, who was professor (honorary degree), was the more felt as his death came so unexpectedly. That very highly-esteemed musical savant was just upon the point of publishing the fourth volume of his "History of Music." One volume more, and the great work would have been complete. When he died (June 28th) he had nearly reached his sixtieth year. His spirit was still as fresh as that of a young man, and as he was likewise well versed in the science of sculpture and painting, and was endowed with an extraordinary memory, his conversation was always engaging and instructive. Another loss, that of the composer Josef Dessauer, was less widely felt, as the younger musical world is but little versed with his name; and yet there was a time when his songs, romances, &c., were received with great success in every concert. Some of those Lieder, as "Nach Sevilla," "Lockung," "Ouvrez" (Bolero), "Der Schwan," "Das Waldvöglein," "Ständchen," and many others, were once very popular, and can still be recommended to our singers. Of four operas which Dessauer composed, none had a lasting success. One of his pieces for piano, "Aus den Alpen," can always be regarded as a welcome remembrance of the Styrian mountains and their songs. Dessauer died July 8th, aged 79 years.

Correspondence.

THE COMPOSER JOHN BARNETT.

To the Editor of the MONTHLY MUSICAL RECORD.

SIR,—Can any of your numerous readers inform me whether copies are obtainable of John Barnett's "Lyric Illustrations of the Modern Poets" (twelve vocal compositions), published in 1834, by D'Almaine and Co.? I am the fortunate possessor of a volume of these beautiful songs, which I prize very highly, and should like to see figure in the concert-programmes of old England, to which country the genial composer evidently belongs. It is a pity that such excellent compositions should be buried in oblivion, and no mention be made of the honoured name of John Barnett.

Referring to the preface, I find the list of subscribers headed by Her Majesty the Queen, followed by such names as W. Binfield, H. Smart, J. Hullah, E. Loder, S. Wesley, G. Linley, J. B. Cramer, J. Braham, and many others. I sincerely hope that John Barnett is still alive, and will kindly condescend to answer my question.

I am, your most obedient Servant,
CHAS. KROLL LAPORTE.

Birkdale Park, 21st August, 1876.

Reviews.

Walse. For the Pianoforte. By JOHANNES BRAHMS. Op. 39. Augener & Co.

HERE are sixteen waltzes. It need hardly be said that they are not waltzes to dance to. Each is a little artistic gem of the highest excellence. They were first introduced in England, we believe, by Mme. Schumann. By musicians their high merit has been fully recognised, and they have attained a popularity only second to the same author's famous Hungarian dances. The only regret that they suggest is that they are not more extended in form. Being among the most esteemed of Herr Brahms's smaller pianoforte works, it seems unnecessary to do more than to acknowledge with pleasure the fact of their recent publication for pianoforte alone, for two performers on the pianoforte, in which form, we believe, they were originally written, and for violin and pianoforte.

Twilight Thoughts. Four Pieces for the Pianoforte. By CHARLES HALLÉ. Op. 7. London and Manchester: Forsyth Brothers.

LONG and favourably as Mr. Charles Hallé has been known to us as a pianist of the first rank, it must be said to our shame that we have but now for the first time met with him as a composer. Reference to an old catalogue shows that it is many years since Mr. Hallé had reached his "Op. 6." To what period of his career his recently published Op. 7 belongs, whether it be a reprint of a work written long ago, or one lately composed, we are not in a position to say. Though bearing no very strong marks of individuality—for it seems easy to trace in them the influence of Mendelssohn, Heller, and Schumann—these four little pieces not only betoken the practised hand of the musician by the manner in which they are laid out for the instrument, but also by their grace and elegance the refined and cultivated mind of their author. We confess to having derived considerable satisfaction from Mr. Hallé's "Twilight Thoughts," and look forward to meeting with him again under similar circumstances.

Six Studies, Op. 31; *Valse Caprice*, Op. 85; *Grand Caprice in the form of a Study*, Op. 86. For the Pianoforte. By CHARLES MAYER. Revised and fingered by E. PAUER. Augener & Co.

REGRET has often been expressed that the late Charles Mayer (1792—1862), one of the most eminent of the virtuosos and professors of the pianoforte of his period, and at the same time a composer of extraordinary skill and readiness—as appears chiefly from his concerto symphonique and pianoforte studies—should have devoted so much precious time during the latter period of his career to the production of works of an ephemeral character. The many graceful trifles which, encouraged by the ready sale they met with, he threw off with astonishing facility, are literally to be counted by the hundred. It is, however, among his earlier compositions that those most likely to endure are to be found. Among them may certainly be classed the six studies and the grand caprice which head this notice. Preserving a classical form, they are strongly marked with what Herr Pauer has happily designated the "philanthropic" principle: that is to say, while admirably calculated to improve technical execution, they will be found at the same time agreeable and attractive to both players and listeners. The "Valse Caprice" is not a waltz to dance to, but a brilliant drawing-room pianoforte piece. All three works bear the *imprimatur* of Herr E. Pauer, by whom they have also been revised and fingered.

Menuetto Grazioso in G, and *Tambourin in D major*. By GLUCK. Transcribed for the Pianoforte by CHARLES HALLÉ. London and Manchester: Forsyth Brothers.

IT will be remembered that some few years back Mme. Schumann introduced at her recitals a gavotte of Gluck's, transcribed for pianoforte by Herr Brahms. It achieved so astonishing a success, that it was at once seized upon by transcribers and published in a variety of forms; further, it led to researches among Gluck's works for movements of a similarly attractive character. Among the results of such researches—and, we may add, among the happiest—it seems probable that these two pieces recently issued by Mr. Charles Hallé may fairly be included. Both are intrinsically excellent as instances of instrumental movements by Gluck, and as transcriptions both are treated in that full, broad, sonorous, orchestral-like manner, which so strongly marks much of the pianoforte music of the present day, and so strikingly contrasts with the thin and contracted style of a bygone age.

Two Sketches and a *Tarantella*. For Pianoforte. By W. F. BANKS. London: Duncan Davison & Co.

THOUGH not pretending to much, by their fluency and melodious character these three pieces betoken a natural musical aptitude on the part of their composer. We say a *natural* aptitude,

because one or two instances of false notation which we meet with seem to point to a want of schooling. At the top of page 4 of the Tarantella (in E flat) we find the following strange notation:—E sharp, G sharp, B flat, D, instead of, as unquestionably it should be, F, A flat, B flat, D; and again at the bottom of the same page, for no ostensible reason, B natural is written in the place of C flat. Apart from these delinquencies there is not much to complain of, and much which promises well for the future.

Grand Septett. By L. VAN BEETHOVEN. Op. 20. Arranged for Pianoforte (solo and duet) by FR. HERMANN. Augener & Co.

NOT a word need be said in commendation of Beethoven's septett, probably the most popular of all his works. The present arrangements of it, both as a solo and as a duet, have been executed by Herr Hermann in a masterly manner. Both are very playable and highly effective. There is an instance on record of the plates of an arrangement of Beethoven's septett—and no bad arrangement either—having been melted down, as unremunerative, by an English publisher of eminence. We may feel sure that, barring accidents, it will be many years before the plates of Herr Hermann's arrangements of this now so favourite work will meet with a similar fate.

Kyrie Eleison. For Solo voices and Chorus, with Organ or Pianoforte accompaniment. By B. LUARD SELBY. Augener & Co.

A perusal of this *Kyrie*, which has but recently been published, fully bears out the account given of it by our Leipzig correspondent on the occasion of its being performed last year (with accompaniment for string orchestra) at one of the examination concerts of the students of the Leipzig Conservatoire. It was then spoken of as being among the best of the pupils' essays, and as showing a decided talent for composition on the part of its author. It may be added that its melodious and refined character betokens the possession of good taste, and its general smoothness—allowing for one or two instances of consecutive octaves (at the bottom of page 6) which seem to have crept in unawares during the process of transcribing, so easily might they have been avoided—points to the attainment of some skill in vocal part-writing.

SONGS.

Six Songs, with Pianoforte accompaniment. By J. BRAHMS. Augener & Co.

1. How art thou, O my queen, arrayed (Wie bist du, meine Königin).
2. In vain I strive to flee thee (Nicht mehr zu dir zu gehen).
3. When mute and sad I wander by (Ich schleich' umher betrübt).
4. Sorrow whose phantoms returning (Wehe, so willst du mich wieder).
5. Fain art thou to chide me, maiden (Bitteres zu sagen denkst du).
6. Lullaby (Wiegenlied).

OF Herr Brahms's music generally, it cannot be said that it is of a kind which readily appeals to the general listener; it has, however, met with wide appreciation among the most musically advanced of our concert audiences. Herr Brahms evidently bestows the same pains upon the composition of a song or a dance measure as upon his more extended works. From the musician's point of view there is always something to be admired and instructive even in his smallest pieces. We therefore hail with satisfaction the publication of these songs as examples of their author's artistic earnestness and feeling. Though by their serious character they will not probably meet with ready admirers, we cannot but think that with nearer acquaintance, as is the case with this composer's works generally, they will grow in estimation.

Six Songs of HEINE, set to music by C. VILLIERS STANFORD. Op. 4 (Stanley Lucas, Weber, & Co.), by their seriousness and earnestness of intention betoken German training and German feeling on the part of their composer, if, indeed, they do not stamp him as a disciple of Herr Brahms. But amid much

that is really beautiful in idea, and which bodes well for the future, it is somewhat disappointing to notice in these songs, short as they are, not only a want of compactness, but also an occasional haziness in the harmony employed, as may be exemplified by reference to bar 3 in No. 2, and bars 3, 4, and 6, in No. 3, in which the appearance of consecutive fifths and octaves might easily have been avoided, and which it would have been well to have attended to, if only for the sake of conciliating carping critics.

In *My Love*, the burden of which is "I love my love and he loves me," by BESSIE PALMER (Hutchins & Romer), we are not only glad to meet with a lady, as a composer, whose absence from the concert-room since she has devoted herself to the lyric stage we have often regretted, but also with a very pretty song. "My Love," which starts with a waltz measure, is just the kind of song we should expect from a vocalist of Miss Palmer's experience—not strikingly original, but melodiously tuneful, smoothly flowing, lying well for the voice, and conceived in a musicianly spirit.]

Under the Lilac, by ARTHUR O'LEARY (Novello, Ewer, & Co.), or, the song of the bee, as it might also have been entitled, points the moral that though flowers will die, love will live. The music, in which the humming of the bee is cleverly imitated, has evidently been suggested by the text. Bright, sprightly, taking, tuneful, and artistically designed, it may fairly be ranked far above the average of English ballads.

Donec Gratus, Horace's Ode IX., Book 3, set as a duet by CHARLES SALAMAN (Novello, Ewer, & Co.), is a worthy sequel to the same composer's much-admired setting of the genial Latin poet's ode, *Ad Chloen*, which appeared a year or two ago. Apart from the unusual fact of its being composed to Latin words—to which, however, an English version, by Malcolm Charles Salaman, is appended—it is refreshing on other grounds to meet with a composition of so refined and uncommonplace a character. In his treatment of Horace, Mr. Salaman's Italian manner—in the best sense of the term—has stood him in good stead, as appears from the smoothly flowing manner in which he has wedded a melody, remarkable for its freedom of rhythm, to Horace's charming lines.

O Providence, I pray Thee, No. 49, of a series of bass songs with pianoforte accompaniment, published by Augener & Co., is an English version of the fine song, "Guide mes pas," from Cherubini's opera, *Les Deux Journées*, which Mr. Santley sang with so much success and effect, and did so much to popularise, on this opera being performed last autumn by Mr. Carl Rosa's English operatic company. To English singers this version of it cannot prove otherwise than welcome.

Eight Children's Songs, with violin and pianoforte accompaniment, composed by CARL REINECKE, Op. 138 (Augener & Co.), though of a most infantile character in regard to their words, by their fancy and refinement cannot but tend to the acquirement of purity in musical taste. On this account, as well as for their freshness and neatness of construction, they will be as welcome to the elder members of musical families, as by their tunefulness and simplicity they will meet with the appreciation of the younger.

Theory with relation to the Practice of Technical Studies for the Pianoforte. By MAX BLUME. London and Edinburgh: Wood & Co.

LEARNING to play the pianoforte without at the same time acquiring some knowledge of the rules of harmony is very much like learning to read or write a language without the use of a grammar. The necessity of combining theoretical with technical instruction has therefore been widely if not generally recognised. The pupil who has been brought up upon such well-known books as Louis Plaidy's or Friedrich Wieck's "Technical Studies," or Professor Macfarren's "Little Clarina's Lesson Book," can have hardly failed to acquire, and that almost unconsciously, a knowledge of the nature of scales and chords simultaneously with the practice of finger exercises. With such works as those at hand, not to mention others of a similar aim, we fail to see the call for a book upon the subject, especially

when in the matter of harmony that book does not take us beyond chords of the ninth. But while fully admitting its good intentions of showing the advantage of teaching music not only mechanically but also theoretically, and at the same time of making the theoretical part of a lesson agreeable to the pupil, it is disappointing to find our author often failing in his endeavour, from inability to express himself clearly. Here is his explanation of "unison:"—"We imagine different voices singing on the piano, so, for instance, if C and E are struck together on the piano, we imagine different voices singing them. Now the smallest distance must be, if both those voices sing the same tone (G) there is no distance at all, but, like nought (0) is considered a number, we consider no distance an interval, and term it 'Prime,' or 'Unison.' Could anything be more perplexing? We find him, too, making use of such unusual terms as "bendings," "own cadence," "short" and "long" fingering, &c. As an old pupil of the late Louis Plaidy it is not surprising that Herr Blume has something to say on the matter of "touch." The chapter he devotes to this we regard as the most valuable in his book. In conclusion, Herr Blume apologises for the inelegance of his English, consequent upon his having been only a short time among us. As consciousness of a fault is often the first step to its amendment, it may be hoped from his evident earnestness that his next essay in book-making may prove more satisfactory.

Concerts, &c.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

IN previous years we have had at this period to speak of the annual orchestral concert of the students of the Royal Academy of Music, it having generally taken place so near the close of July as to have made it impossible for us to take notice of it in our August number. We are glad to note the fact that during the past year orchestral concerts, as well as concerts of chamber music, &c., given by the students of the Royal Academy of Music, have been events of such frequent occurrence, that the term "annual orchestral concert" has become obsolete. Formerly it was the custom to distribute the prizes at this annual orchestral concert, which took place at the very close of the summer term. This year there has been a divergence from this plan, due, we believe, to the accident that St. James's Hall was not available for such a purpose after the 5th of July. Accordingly the last orchestral concert of the summer term was given at St. James's Hall on that date, and the ceremonial of distributing the prizes was reserved for a separate occasion, which took place in the new concert-room of the Royal Academy on the afternoon of July 21. We cannot but regard the innovation of making the distribution of prizes a distinct function, and keeping it apart from one of the most important concerts of the academical year, otherwise than as commendable; firstly, because an orchestral concert of the students is generally a sufficiently lengthy affair, and of sufficient interest to stand upon its own merits; and secondly, because the supplementing it by a distribution of prizes cannot but tend to detract from its interest with many of the audience as a purely musical entertainment, or, as we might rather say, exhibition of the results for which many of the prizes are awarded. It is of the last orchestral concert of the summer term, and the distribution of prizes on a subsequent occasion, that we have now briefly to speak. The programme of the concert, which was conducted by Mr. Walter Macfarren, stood as follows:—

SINFONIA, in D minor (MS.), first movement. "Alkestis." *Olineria Prescott.* (Student.)
 ARIA "Batti, batti" .. (Don Giovanni) .. *Mozart.*
 (Violoncello obbligato, Mr. LITA FARRAR.)
 CONCERTO, in B flat (first movement) *Dussek.*
 Pianoforte, Miss CLARA COOPER.
 (Sir Francis Goldsmid Scholar.)
 AIR "Let the bright Seraphim" .. (Samson) .. *Handel.*
 (Trumpet obbligato, Mr. T. HARPER.)
 CAPRICCIO, in G minor (MS.) *J. Ridgway, Student.*
 Pianoforte, Mr. J. RIDGWAY.
 ARIA "Deh Vieni non Tardar" .. (Nozze di Figaro) .. *Mozart.*
 Miss KATE BRAND.
 CONCERTO, in E flat (first movement) *Mozart.*
 Clarinet, Miss FRANCES THOMAS.
 RECIT. (accompanied) .. "Oh Zenobia, oh Infelice!" .. (MS.) .. *W. Dorrell.*
 ED
 ARIA "Cada l'Indegno" .. (Words by *Metastasio.*)
 Mr. WADMORE.

AIR "Thy mighty Power" .. *Vincent Noville*
 Miss AMY AYLWARD.
 (Double Bass obligato, Mr. A. HARPER, Professors' Scholar.)
 (Accompanied on the Pianoforte by Miss ANNIE BUTTERWORTH.)
 CONCERTO, in G minor *Mendelssohn.*
 Pianoforte, Miss ETHEL GOOLD, Lady Goldsmid Scholar.
 DUET "The Lord is a Man of War" .. (Israel in Egypt) .. *Handel.*
 Mr. GEORGE and Mr. GORDON GOUGH.
 INTERMEZZO, in C minor (MS.) *A. H. Jackson, Student.*
 SCENA "Casta Diva" .. (Norma) .. *Bellini.*
 Miss AGNES LARKCOM.
 CONCERTO, in C (first movement) *Mozart.*
 Pianoforte, Mr. DEAS.
 DUET "Come, be gay" .. (Der Freischütz) .. *Weber.*
 Miss MARIE DUVAL and Miss MARY DAVIES.
 (Westmorland Scholar.) (Welsh Choral Union Scholar.)
 REVERIE, in E flat *Vieuxtemps.*
 Violin, Miss JULIA DE NOLTE, Professors' Scholar.
 (Accompanied on the Pianoforte by Miss KATE STEEL.)
 ARIA "Dalla Sua Pace" .. (Don Giovanni) .. *Mozart.*
 Mr. SELIGMANN.
 CORO (for Female Voices) .. "La Carità" *Rossini.*
 Solo, Miss KATE BRAND.
 (Accompanied on the Pianoforte by Mr. F. W. W. BANFFVLEDE.)
 (Potter Exhibitioner.)
 OVERTURE, in C (MS.) *H. W. Little, Student.*

Such a programme speaks for itself, both as testifying to the high-class and classical character of the music in which instruction is given, and to the high standard of composition aimed at. To speak of it in detail seems to us superfluous. For the general reader can derive no possible interest from being told that Miss M— evinced the "possession of remarkable technique," or that Miss N— "seemed endowed with remarkable powers of expression." Such remarks can only interest the individuals to whom they are applied, or their immediate friends. It seems to us therefore sufficient to state that the general results were highly satisfactory, and afforded indisputable evidence of the excellence of the instruction imparted at this national institution. It may not seem invidious, however, to point to the number and high character of the students' compositions presented, at the head of which stood a movement from a symphony by a lady, which in the recent competition at the Alexandra Palace received the high commendation of the judges, and which we hope to have an opportunity ere long of hearing in its entirety. Further, we may point to the manner in which two ladies distinguished themselves as executants upon two such unusual instruments for ladies as the clarinet and violin. Nor should we overlook the promise of virtuosity as a double-bass player displayed by one of the gentlemen, especially as pointing to the fact that the course of instruction provided by the institution is not restricted to those instruments most commonly in use.

The duty of distributing the prizes, which was kindly undertaken by Mme. Christine Nilsson, was preceded by the performance of an organ voluntary by Mr. Rose, and Mendelssohn's eight-part psalm, "Judge me, O God," by the choir. The following is the list of the awards:—

MEMORIAL PRIZES.

LUCAS SILVER MEDAL.—In memory of Charles Lucas, Student, Professor, Conductor, and Principal, for the composition of the Magnificat for one or more solo voices, chorus, orchestra, and organ.—Eaton Fanning. Highly commended—Oliveria L. Prescott.

FAREPA-ROSA GOLD MEDAL.—In memory of Euphrosyne Farepa-Rosa (endowed by Carl Rosa), for the singing of pieces selected by the Committee.—Mary Davies.—Highly commended—Albion Albu, Amy Aylward, Jessie Jones, Agnes Larkcom, Marian Williams.

STERNDAL BENNETT PRIZE (*Purse of Ten Guineas*).—In memory of Professor Sir William Sterndale Bennett, Mus.D., M.A., D.C.L., Student, Professor, and Principal, for the playing of a composition by Professor Sir William Sterndale Bennett, selected by the Committee.—Kate Steel. Highly commended—Janie Burrough, Ethel Goold, Edith Brand, Margaret Bucknall, Nancy Evans.

ANNUAL PRIZES.—FEMALE DEPARTMENT.

CERTIFICATES OF MERIT.—The highest honour attainable at this examination, awarded only to students who have previously received silver medals.—Singing: Mary Davies, Jessie Jones, Agnes Larkcom. Pianoforte: Edith Brand, Margaret Bucknall. Violin: Gabrielle Vailant.

SILVER MEDALS, to those who have already received bronze medals.—Singing: Annie E. Bolingbroke, Marian Williams. Pianoforte: Alice Borton, Ethel Goold, Kate Steel, Nancy Evans. Violin: Ada Brand. Clarinet: Frances Thomas.

HIGH COMMENDATIONS, to those who have already received bronze medals.—Singing: Annie Butterworth, Hannah Edouard, Marietta Phillips, Marie Duval, Mary Jane Williams. Pianoforte: Clara Cooper, Ellen Holmes, Isabel Thurgood.

BRONZE MEDALS.—Singing: Annie Albu, Amy Aylward, Kate Brand, Thekla Fischer, Ellen Orridge, Hannah Roby. Pianoforte: Alice Heathcote, Kate Lyons, Minnie Elwell, Jessie Percival, Emily Tate, Fanny Boxell, Julia Chute, Fanny Ellis, Margaret Robertson, Annie Frost. Organ: Mary Butterworth.

BOOKS.—Singing: Lizzie Evans, Amelia Featherby, Sarah Geary, Virginia Phillips, Catherine Shaboe, Sarah Sutton, Carrie Thomas, Mary Webb. Pianoforte: Lucy Ellam, Mary B. Hann, Annie Abraham, Ada

Hazard, Grace Gye, Ada Goldsmith, Margaret Morgan, Jenk Goode, Annie Smith, Ethel Gregory, Fanny Elliot, Fanny Puzey, Julia Kirk. *Harp*: Edith Brand.

SECOND STUDIES.—Book.—Amy Aylward. Highly commended.—*Pianoforte*: Ada Brand, Frances Thomas, Lita Farrar.

MALE DEPARTMENT.

CERTIFICATES OF MERIT.—*Pianoforte*: F. W. W. Bampfylde.

SILVER MEDALS.—*Pianoforte*: Tobias Matthey, Edward Morton, Lindsay Deas. *Organ*: Henry R. Rose. *Harmony*: H. Walmsley Little. High commendation.—*Harmony*: Arthur H. Jackson.

Bronze Medals.—*Singing*: Gordon Gooch, James Sauvage. *Pianoforte*: H. Walmsley Little, Tom Silver, Arnold Kennedy, George Elliot, Alfred Luton, Henry R. Rose. *Harp*: Taliesan James. *Violin*: George Bowron. *Harmony*: Eaton Fanning.

BOOKS.—*Singing*: Arthur Jarrait, Harry Seligmann. *Pianoforte*: Edwin Flavell, Henry Cockram, George Smith, Alfred Shaw, George Kyle. *Violin*: John Payne.

PRIZE VIOLIN BOW.—Made and presented to the Institution by Mr. James Tubbs, of Wardour Street.—Frank B. Smythies.

SECOND STUDY.—Highly commended.—*Violoncello*: George Elliott.

EXHIBITIONS AND SCHOLARSHIPS.

POTTER EXHIBITIONER.—F. W. W. Bampfylde.

WESTMOORLAND SCHOLAR.—Marie Duval.

STERNDALE BENNETT SCHOLAR.—Tom Silver.

WELSH CHORAL UNION SCHOLAR.—Mary Davies.

PARFA-ROSA SCHOLAR.—Clara Samuel.

SIR JOHN GOSS SCHOLAR.—Ernest Ford.

LADY GOLDSMID SCHOLAR.—Ethel Gooch.

SIR FRANCIS GOLDSMID SCHOLAR.—Clara Cooper.

PROFESSOR'S SCHOLARS.—*Violin*: Julia de Nolte. *Double Bass*: Alfred Harper.

The Examiners, assisted in each class by the Principal, were for—*Harmony*: H. C. Banister, H. C. Lunn, C. Steggall, Mus. D., Cantab.; Arthur Sullivan, Mus. D., Cantab. *Singing*: G. Benson, Ettore Fiori, Manuel Garcia, P. Goldberg, A. Randegger, T. A. Walworth. *Pianoforte*: H. R. Evers, Walter Fitton, S. Kemp, Arthur O'Leary, Harold Thomas, Brinley Richards, Frederick Westlake, T. Winham. *Orchestral Instruments*: F. J. Amor, H. Lazarus, Walter Pettit, F. Ralph, P. Sainton, J. Thomas, A. White. *Organ*: Sir J. Goss, Mus. D., Cantab.; C. Steggall, Mus. D., Cantab.

From an interesting and fluent speech, delivered by the Principal, Professor G. A. Macfarren, Mus. Doc., bearing principally upon the antecedent history of the institution, it was satisfactory to learn that at no previous period of its existence have the students been so numerous. During the past term the number of students under instruction has been 336. It was pleasing, too, to hear it stated by the Professor as his conviction that nothing tends more towards the civilisation of a nation than the study and propagation of musical art, and hence that all should do something to encourage it. Such earnestness and so high-minded a sense of his calling as Professor Macfarren shows, cannot but exert a healthy influence upon the institution of which he is the Principal, but also, through it, upon the country at large.

Musical Notes.

FOR the second Bristol Musical Festival, which takes place in October, the following arrangements have been made:—Tuesday, October 17—morning, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*; evening, Verdi's *Requiem* and a selection. Wednesday morning, Handel's *Israel in Egypt*; evening, miscellaneous selection. Thursday morning, Spohr's *Fall of Babylon* and Beethoven's *Engedi*; evening, Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise* and selection. Friday morning, Handel's *Messiah*. The Festival will be conducted by Mr. Charles Hallé.

THE following is the scheme of the Festival of the Three Choirs, to be held at Hereford, under the direction of Mr. G. Townshend Smith, organist of the Cathedral:—Tuesday morning, September 22, in the Cathedral, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*; Tuesday evening, Handel's *Samson* and Part I. of Haydn's *Creation*. Wednesday morning, Spohr's *Last Judgment* and Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise*. Thursday morning, Mr. J. F. Barnett's oratorio, *The Raising of Lazarus*, Gounod's *St. Cecilia* mass, and the "Hallelujah" chorus from Beethoven's *Mount of Olives*. Friday morning, Handel's *Messiah*. There will be secular concerts on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evenings in the Shire Hall.

THE following summary of performances at the Royal Opera, Berlin, from the 13th August, 1875, to the 23rd June, 1876, may be regarded as a kind of thermometer of the musical taste existing in the Prussian capital, at least so far as regards opera. The repertory of two hundred and eleven performances was formed of forty-five different works by twenty-five different composers. The novelties were *Das goldene Kreuz*, by Ignaz Brüll; Wagner's *Tristan und*

Isolde; and Verdi's *Requiem*. Of the forty-five works constituting the repertory, *Das goldene Kreuz* was performed thirteen times; *Lohengrin*, eleven; *Die Macchabier* and *Der Freischütz*, ten each; *Le Nozze*, nine; *Le Domino Noir* and *Il Trovatore*, eight each; *Don Juan*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Mignon*, seven each; *Faust*, *La Figlia del Reggimento*, *Fidelio*, and *Tristan und Isolde*, six each; *Rienzi*, *Armide*, *Le Prophète*, *L'Africaine*, and *Die Lustigen Weiber von Windsor*, five each; *Les Huguenots*, *Cesario*, *La Juive*, *Aida*, *La Part du Diable*, *Oberon*, *Le Maçon*, and *Requiem*, four each; *Jessonda* and *Il Barbiere*, three each; *Belmonte und Constanze*, *A-ing-so-hi*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, *Der stiegende Holländer*, *Das Nachtlager in Granada*, *Joseph*, *Les Deux Journées*, and *Guillaume Tell*, two each; *La Dame Blanche*, *Euryanthe*, *Caesar und Zimmermann*, once each. Wagner, therefore, headed the list with thirty-one performances and five works; Mozart was represented by twenty-five and four; Auber, by eighteen and four; Meyerbeer, by sixteen and four; Verdi, by sixteen and three; Weber, by fifteen and three; Brüll, by thirteen and one; Rubinstein, by ten and one; Gluck, by nine and three; Ambrose Thomas, by seven and one; Beethoven, by six and one; Gounod, by six and one; Donizetti, by six and one; Rossini, by five and two; Nicolai, by five and one; Taubert, by four and one; Halévy, by four and one; Spohr, by three and one; Cherubini, by two and one; Méhul, by two and one; Kreutzer, by two and one; Flotow, by two and one; Wüster, by two and one; Boieldieu, by one and one; and Lortzing, by one and one.

It will be interesting to compare the above with similar summaries of the performances during the past season at the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden, and at Her Majesty's Opera, Drury Lane. At Covent Garden the repertory of eighty-five performances was formed of twenty-seven different works by twelve composers. *Tannhäuser* and *Aida* were the only novelties. *Tannhäuser* was performed eight times; *Aida*, five; *Don Giovanni*, five; *Fra Diavolo*, five; *Traviata*, five; *Elisir d'Amore*, four; *Guglielmo Tell*, four; *Il Ballo*, four; *Etoile*, four; *Don Pasquale*, three; *Lucia*, three; *Il Barbiere*, three; *Rigoletto*, three; *Dinorah*, three; *Marta*, three; *Lohengrin*, three; *Nozze di Figaro*, twice; *Il Flauto Magico*, twice; *Faust*, twice; *Trovatore*, twice; *Huguenots*, twice; *Africaine*, twice; *Puritani*, twice; and *La Figlia*, *Favorita*, *Roméo*, *Sonnambula*, *Hamlet*, *Crispino*, each once. Here Verdi heads the list with nineteen performances and five works; Donizetti was represented by twelve performances and five works; Meyerbeer, by eleven and four; Wagner, by eleven and two; Mozart, by nine and three; Rossini, by seven and two; Auber, by five and one; Bellini, by three and two; Flotow, by three and one; Gounod, by three and two; Ambrose Thomas, by one and one; and the Brothers Ricci, by one and one.

At Drury Lane, where no novelty was even promised, there were fifty-one representations of seventeen operas by ten composers. *Faust* was given ten times; *Don Giovanni*, seven; *Lohengrin*, five; *Il Barbiere* and *Semiramide*, each four; *Lucresia*, *Huguenots*, and *Roberto*, each three; *Lucia*, *Norma*, *Sonnambula*, *Traviata*, each twice; and *Marta*, *Rigoletto*, *Trovatore*, *La Figlia*, and *Fidelio*, each once. Gounod was represented by ten performances and one work; Rossini, by eight and two; Mozart, by seven and one; Meyerbeer, by six and two; Donizetti, by six and three; Wagner, by five and one; Verdi, by four and three; Flotow, by one and one; and Beethoven, by one and one.

All communications respecting Contributions should be addressed to the Editor, and must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer, as a guarantee of good faith.

The Editor cannot undertake to return Rejected Communications.

Business letters should be addressed to the Publishers, Messrs. AUGENER & Co., 86, Newgate Street.

The number of the MUSICAL RECORD has now reached 6,000 per Month. This can be verified at Messrs. CASSELL PETER & GALPIN's, the Printers, Belle Sauvage Yard, Ludgate Hill.